

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND SHEILA KUEHL

March 19, 2019

Coworking Space Demonstration Project

In August 1990, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted Telecommuting Standards that allowed employees to work from home (County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 5.90), primarily to help reduce traffic congestion. In later years, the Board expanded the ordinance to align it with the County’s various clean air goals, with a focus on reducing tailpipe emissions from vehicles used for commuting between home and County worksites. This led to a more formal County Telework Program, included in Board Policy 9.090, which promotes opportunities for employees to work at a location other than their primary office.

Our Telework Program, in which 7,655 County employees were trained in since the program’s inception, helps the County achieve its regional clean air and traffic mitigation goals as mandated by the South Coast Air Quality Management District’s Rule 2202. The program also helps conserve County resources, reduce absenteeism, increase productivity, reduce overhead and improve employee morale. Under the current program, County employees, with approval from their supervisors and an oversight plan from

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management, can telework from the employee's home or from an alternate worksite that is closer to home than their regular work location. Telework participants may telework one or more days per week, though Teleworking schedules vary by department.

The County's Telework Program was primarily designed for employees who work in an office setting and who have regular office hours, and did not originally speak to the County employees who work primarily in the field, like Department of Public Health Restaurant Inspectors, Department of Children and Family Services and Department of Public Social Services Child Social Workers and Inspectors, and many others. The County spends a considerable amount of money to pay for office space, desktop computers, parking and other expenses for these employees, who are likely in the thousands, who do not necessarily need a work station for a standard 40-hour a week, Monday through Friday.

In May 2018, the Internal Services Department (ISD) conducted research indicating that expansion of teleworking options could help to address some of the ISD's key operational challenges and performance goals. Studies by the United States Office of Personnel Management, United States Government Accountability Office, major corporations, and various universities have reported measurable benefits to teleworking. Based on these findings, ISD developed a plan to administer a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of teleworking relative to environmental compliance, continuity of operations plans during emergencies, employee recruitment and retention, limited office space, scarcity of employee parking spaces, employee attendance and impacts to internal communications.

The pilot program is designed to allow ISD employees, and others, the opportunity to work one day per week from an alternate location that provides a shorter

commute; working from home would not be an option for employees who participate in the pilot. In an effort to identify potential telework locations, ISD and the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) Real Estate Division asked other County departments to identify available space that could accommodate dedicated work stations for teleworking purposes. ISD and the CEO discovered that suitable space is extremely limited and departments faced their own challenges in meeting office space needs for staff. This led the Internal Services Department to consider procuring shared office and coworking spaces managed by private companies, like the spaces offered by WeWork or Regus. Such facilities typically have minimal facility improvement and setup costs, fully furnished offices that are move-in ready and scalable space options. The shared offices business model is based on monthly membership fees to access the work sites rather than long-term lease agreements.

More recently, the Department of Public Health (DPH) expressed a desire to identify additional office space options for some of the 1,500 DPH employees who do not need permanent, Monday through Friday workstations, including their many Environmental Health Field Inspectors, who travel throughout the County to conduct restaurant and food facility inspections.

In addition, LA County Library (Library) has expressed a desire for executive and administrative staff to participate in this shared office pilot. With 87 library locations serving 49 cities and all of the unincorporated areas of the county, Library executives and managers spend a considerable amount of time driving between library headquarters, 5 regional offices, library locations and sites within the 3,000 square mile service area to meet with frontline library services staff, contract city managers, councilmembers and county partners. The shared office business model would greatly benefit the Department by limiting travel time, maximizing work hours in between

meetings, optimizing work time and reducing stress.

In August 2018, ISD released a Request for Information (RFI) for Shared Office and Coworking Spaces. The RFI conveyed the County's interest in reviewing space alternatives that can accommodate teleworking, temporary 'swing space' or hoteling, to support organizational growth and emergency continuity of operations plans. Additionally, the RFI conveyed that at any given time, one or more County departments may need office space for short-term and long-term periods. The RFI included a questionnaire to obtain specific information about office locations, amenities, services and pricing options available to members.

The CEO's Real Estate Division oversees all aspects of County-owned and leased property used for employee worksites. At present, membership-based shared offices and coworking space are not included in workspace governance, but are being considered by the CEO's Real Estate Division. Board of Supervisors approval is now needed to direct the implementation of a Coworking Space Demonstration Project to gather data and practical experience to help the County formulate new strategies and policies for Countywide office space management.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct:

1. The Director of Internal Services, the Director of Public Health and the County Librarian, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and Director of Personnel, to implement a one year pilot program for certain employees to telework from membership-based shared office spaces located within Los Angeles County;
2. The Director of Internal Services, using Purchasing Agent authority, to procure membership with one or more shared office providers for the purposes of this pilot program; and

3. The Director of Personnel, in collaboration with the CEO's Real Estate Division, the Director of Internal Services and the Director of Public Health, to gather data on the operational, fiscal, environmental, and personnel impacts of the pilot program and to submit a related report to the Board 90 days after the conclusion of the program.

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